

**TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE  
IN REHABILITATION SCIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF  
COLORADO, DENVER**

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**I. SUMMARY**

The University of Colorado, Denver (UCD) has submitted a proposal to offer a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Rehabilitation Science. This proposed program will lead to the preparation of future leaders in the field of rehabilitation. This field supports students seeking careers as research scientists in academia, industry or health care settings. It will be an interdisciplinary program that will integrate knowledge from the basic and clinical science to improve understanding of human movement physical function and disability.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The following is summarized from the University of Colorado's request:

The Rehabilitation Science Program will prepare future leaders to advance our current understanding of human movement, physical function, and disablement. Students will acquire breadth of knowledge through lecture and laboratory coursework in research methodology and rehabilitation science. Depth of knowledge will be gained through elective coursework in one of five areas of specialization: applied cellular physiology, exercise and cardiopulmonary physiology, motor control, biomechanics, or lifespan studies. Consistent with the interdisciplinary focus of this degree, coursework will be offered from a range of disciplines within the basic and clinical sciences at the University of Colorado Anschutz, Auraria, and Boulder campuses.

**ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT**

This degree supports the role and mission of the University of Colorado, Denver Health Sciences Center campus. The statutory mission states:

*The health sciences center campus of the university of Colorado shall offer specialized baccalaureate, first-professional, master's, and doctoral degree programs in health-related disciplines and professions. It shall be affiliated with the university of Colorado hospital and other health care facilities that offer settings for education, clinical practice, and basic and applied research. It shall have exclusive authority in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and physical therapy. C.R.S. 23-20-101(d)*

### **COSTS AND RESOURCES**

The Rehabilitation Science Program will function as a tuition and grant funded program that will utilize existing interdisciplinary resources across three university campuses, with a small expected enrollment of two to three students per year. The School of Medicine and Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation have already invested substantial resources in core training facilities to be used by the proposed program, such that no additional facilities, space, or equipment will be required. Conservative projections indicate that tuition income from the PhD program, combined with start-up support from the Colorado Clinical and Translational Science Institute, will be sufficient to implement the program. In the unlikely event that faculty are unable to secure extramural funding within five years to sustain and expand student support mechanisms, the Rehabilitation Science Program will convert to a tuition based funding model in which students will fund the full cost of their education and the tuition will be sufficient to maintain program operations without any further investment or reallocation of funds within the University.

### **DUPLICATION/SIMILAR PROGRAMS IN THE STATE**

No other public or private institutions of higher education in Colorado offer a PhD degree in Rehabilitation Science. The primary feature that distinguishes the proposed Rehabilitation Science Program from existing programs that share an interest in physical activity and human health is our unique focus on physical disablement and clinical rehabilitation.

### **III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

The Department staff has reviewed this proposed program to ensure that it meets the State's performance measures outlined in C.R.S. §23-5-129(6) (b). The program meets all performance measures set forth by the state.

### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Doctor of Philosophy degree in Rehabilitation Science is consistent with the University of Colorado, Denver Health Sciences' center campus role and mission. Staff recommends that the Commission approve this degree.**

### **V. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

Copies of all relevant materials are on file in the Academic Affairs office and are available upon request.

### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

C.R.S. §23-5-129(6) (b)